United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ In Paris today, Secretary-General stresses yesterday's raid on Iraq conforms to Security Council's resolutions; expresses hope for positive outcome of Geneva peace talks on former Yugoslavia; continues negotiations for return of Palestinian deportees; and expresses optimism for solution to Cyprus problem.

+ Following intensive talks, Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti, Dante Caputo, reaches understanding on framework for talks on political solution for the island.

+ UNAVEM personnel pulled out of number of locations in Angola due to "deteriorating conditions"; Special Representative Margaret Anstee arranges meeting for Government and UNITA representatives, hopefully by "this weekend".

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In Paris today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the Diplomatic Press Club that the raid carried out yesterday against Iraq had received a mandate from Security Council resolution 687. "As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I can say that this action was taken and conforms to the resolutions of the Security Council and conforms to the Charter of the United Nations", said Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The Secretary-General stressed that the cause of the raid was the violation by Iraq of Security Council resolution 687 concerning the cease-fire.

Answering a question about his assessment of the Geneva peace talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Secretary-General said that he was prepared to wait a few more days before drawing a conclusion. "Special Representative Cyrus Vance is optimistic and despite the difficulties he is maintaining the momentum for negotiations", said the Secretary-General. He warned, however, that if no response was given to the peace plan in the next six days, he would have to report the situation to the Security Council.

On the question of the Palestinian deportees, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated that, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to him by Council

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resolution 799, he had sent not one - but two envoys to the Middle East to try and negotiate the return of the more than 400 Palestinians deported by Israel from the occupied territories. The talks continued, said the Secretary-General, who insisted that, according to the Council's resolution, the deportees must be allowed to return. "If the contacts are positive, if there is progress, then we can wait", explained the Secretary-General. "If not", he continued, "I am obliged to report to the Security Council and it is up to the Council to assume its responsibilites".

Also today, following a meeting with President Georges Vassiliou of Cyprus, the Secretary-General expressed his belief that at the next meeting of the leaders od the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities - scheduled for March at Headquarters - a solution can be found to the Cyprus problem. "I am an optimist", said the Secretary-General."It takes time and patience to find a solution to a problem, but I believe that we'll find a solution".

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The efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti, Dante Caputo, have resulted in an understanding on a framework which will facilitate the holding of talks to reach a political solution to the Haitian crisis and on the possible dispatch by the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) of a civilian-led mission to monitor the human rights situation in Haiti. Mr. Caputo will continue his efforts in Port-au-Prince in the coming days, the Secretary-General's Spokesman said today at Headquarters.

The Spokesman said that Mr. Caputo had spent the last week in Washington for several rounds of intensive talks on the Haitian situation with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Secretary-General of the OAS, Joao Baena Soares, and with top officials of the State Department. Last Friday, Mr. Caputo had a meeting with Secretary of State-designate Warren Christopher.

The Spokesman also said there was a letter from President Aristide to the Secretary-General regarding the human rights situation in Haiti and the ideas for starting a process of negotiations for the restoration of peace and a political solution in that country.

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In view of the increasing hostilities and the deterioration of the security situation in Angola, which has placed many personnel of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) in danger, the UNAVEM has evacuated its teams located in 38 troop assembly areas and critical points, as well as of one Regional Headquarters in Huambo, according to Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Margaret Anstee. Previously, UNAVEM was present in 67 locations throughout the country and had six Regional Headquarters.

In the meantime, the efforts undertaken by Miss Anstee over the last few days to bring about an urgent meeting between representatives of the Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)

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sides in order to secure a cease-fire have resulted in an agreement, with both sides indicating now their willingness to hold a meeting in Addis Ababa, under the United Nations auspices. If practical arrangements can be made in time, it was hoped that the meeting could take place this weekend, said the Special Representative. The object of the meeting was not only to bring to an end the hostilities that have engulfed the country, but also to establish the basis for a return to political negotiation within the framework of the Peace Accords signed in Portugal in May 1991, Miss Anstee said.

Meanwhile, fighting has intensified in Huambo and M'Banza Congo and continues in Menongue. The situation in Luena is reported calmer than yesterday with sporadic exchanges of fire. Two personnel of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) were injured in the past few days in separate incidents.

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